Religious Freedom in America: Under God, Under Debate

Mariah George Senior Division Historical Exhibit Word count: 499 words

Process Paper: 373 words

Process Paper

How did you choose your topic and how does it relate to the annual theme?

I chose this topic because I am interested in philosophical and religious questions, and this is quite relevant to that. Debate obviously goes hand in hand with this topic because of the different sides that are debated and backed up. Diplomacy is related because of the court cases and discussions involving "under God" being added to/taken away from the pledge.

How did you conduct your research?

I did a lot of research online, and on The Library of Congress for articles, news, magazines, books, etc. Often I would go to one website that would lead me to another through its citations. I made sure to do the citations for that website before going on to another one.

How did you create your project?

At first, I mainly focused on getting sources and research done, and then I started compiling the information into topics and sides of the debate. After I did that, I created a timeline of all of the events that influenced the pledge of allegiance. From then I created a Google Drawing and added all the information into the virtual exhibit. I then added pictures and newspapers and cited them. For my word count, I copied and pasted into a separate document all of the words that counted towards the word count.

What is your historical argument/thesis?

On June 14, 1954, After hearing a moving sermon by Reverend George M. Docherty on the lack of a mention of God in the American pledge, President Eisenhower supported Congress in adding the words 'under God' to the pledge of allegiance, accentuating a crucial part of the American dream: Religious Freedom. Debate on whether it should still be included is ever-present, and our one nation under God is becoming less indivisible.

In what ways is your topic significant in history?

My topic is significant in history because "under God" had a lot to do with the war going on at the time, and influenced many people as it accentuated a major part of America's founding. Debate and diplomacy were quite present along the way, and played major roles in the pledge that we say today.

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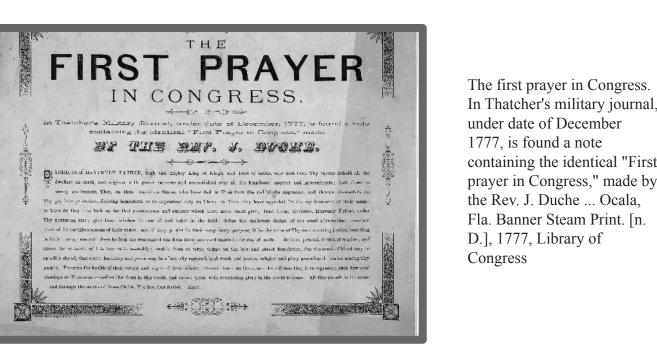
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Religious Freedom in America: Under God, Under Debate

America's Foundation: Religion

It is important to explore the founding of our country and the religious background associated with it. With Christianity as the largest religion worldwide as well as in America, it is no surprise it is mentioned in a lot of our documents and official declarations, including the Pledge of Allegiance. For example, a great many of our founding fathers were Christian, and this shows in the language of their speeches and writings.



Some believe that "Many of the founding fathers—Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, Madison and Monroe—practiced a faith called solving social and political problems." some of these same founding fathers and other historians have written statements that contradict this notion, like these statements by Thomas

"To say that he [George Washington] was not a Christian would be to impeach his sincerity and honesty. Of all men in the world, Washington was certainly the last whom any one would charge with dissimulation or indirectness [hypocrisies and evasiveness]; and if he was so scrupulous in Deism. Deism is a philosophical belief avoiding even a shadow of these faults in every known act of his life, in human reason as a reliable means of [regardless of] however unimportant, is it likely, is it credible, that in a matter of the highest and most serious importance [his religious faith, that] However, this statement being possible, he should practice through a long series of years a deliberate deception upon his friends and the public? It is neither credible nor possible."

Thomas Jefferson to Charles Thomson, 9 January 1816

A PRAYER GEORGE WASHINGTON Allordates Code We make our sarmers proper that They will have the Charact Season in The body prosection, that thou will incline the brover or the contense to cultivate a specificity rabordination and obelience to government. and exicution a brotherly affection and last too one another and for their fellow-citizens of the United States at large, And tracily that Three will most granionally be planted to dispose us ell to do justice, to interpreter and to demand surselves with that charley hamility and facilia. tempor of mind which were the characteristics of the Linder Author of our birned religious without a knowler insiterior, as more expuntehe three things we can never hope to be a happy nation. Greek our supplication, on houses. Thee, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amer. and the production of mathematical problems. Presented to The Daughters of The American Resolution by The Octorial Washington University as a token of its approximation of

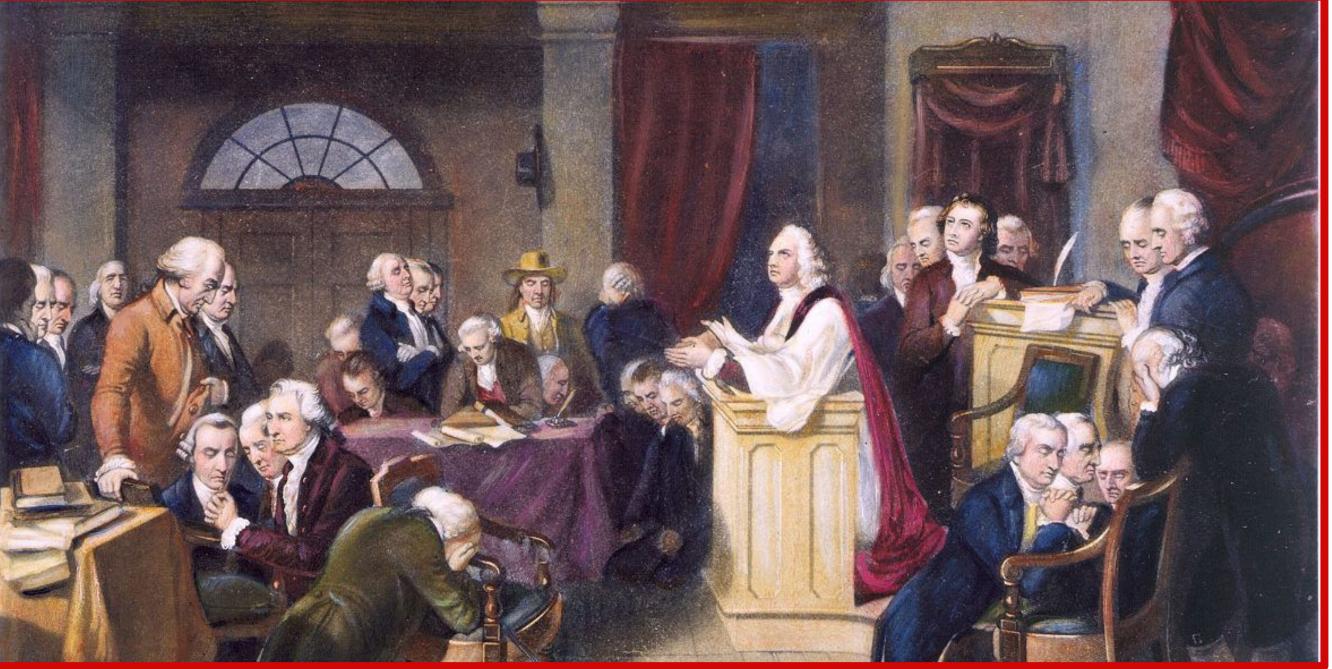
Special Convention in which the honorary degree or Dono of Laws was conferred upon His Majorry, Albert, the King of the

WELIAH HELER COLLER,

Second or Section Should be the case to be a

American revolution by the George Washington University as a token of its appre. Washington, 1919.

-Jared Sparks, Author of The Dictionary of American Biography "I am a real Christian, that is to say, a disciple of the doctrines of Jesus." Jefferson and historian Jared Sparks.



FirsFirst prayer of the continental Congress, 2018, Plymouth Rock Foundation

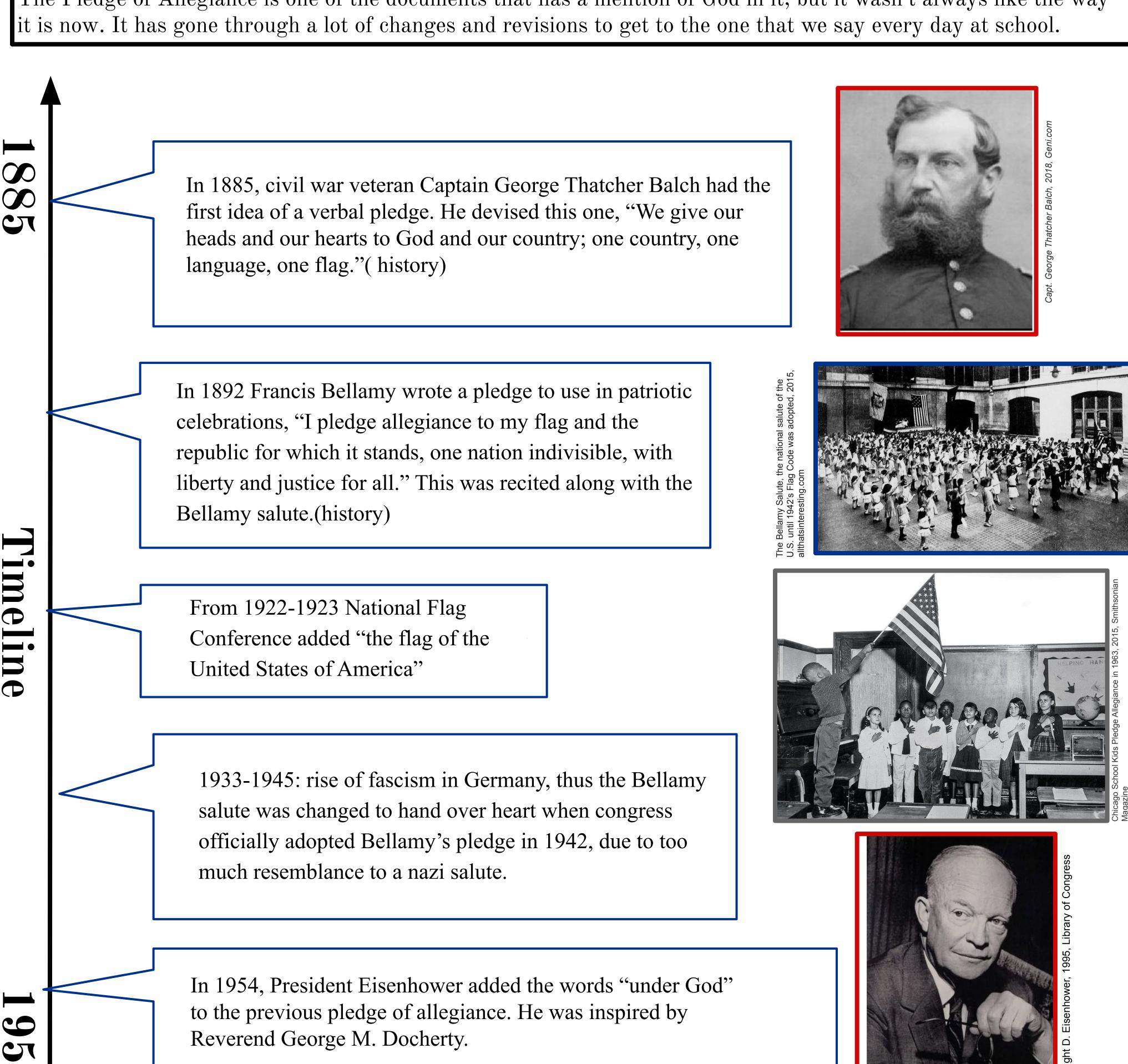
"In short, while America did not have a Christian Founding in the sense of creating a theocracy, its Founding was deeply shaped by Christian moral truths. More important, it created a regime that was hospitable to Christians, but also to practitioners of other religions."

-Mark David Hall

Herbert Hoover Distinguished Professor of Political Science

The History of the Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance is one of the documents that has a mention of God in it, but it wasn't always like the way



The pledge now reads, "I Pledge Allegiance to the flag, of the United States of America, And to the republic for

which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

On June 14, 1954, After hearing a moving sermon by Reverend George M. Docherty on the lack of a mention of God in the American pledge, President Eisenhower supported Congress in adding the words 'under God' to the pledge of allegiance, accentuating a crucial part of the American dream: Religious Freedom. Debate on whether it should still be included is ever-present, and our one nation under God is becoming less indivisible.

"What, therefore, is missing in the pledge of allegiance that Americans have been saying off and on since 1892, and officially since 1942? The one fundamental concept that completely and ultimately separates Communist Russia from the democratic institutions of this country. This was seen clearly by Lincoln. Under God this people shall know a new birth of freedom, and "under God" are the definitive

-Rev. George M. Docherty

The Sermon That Inspired

George MacPherson Docherty was born in Glasgow, Scotland, and became a Presbyterian reverend after moving to the U.S in 1950. He was surprised to learn that the newly adopted pledge had no mention of religion or God in it. He then went on to become a leader in the movement to add "under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance, and his sermon was the one that inspired Eisenhower to do just that.



Words, 'Under God,' Inserted In Pledge of Allegiance

country's most powerful resource." school morning, to our country's

was presented by the Legion. Rep. is appalled by the prospect of led the group in reciting the ing the transcendence of reli faith in America's heritage As he signed the bill. Eisen-future; in this way we sha ower issued this statement: stantly strengthen those spring the mil-weapons which forever will daily proclaim in city and town, in peace or in war."

pringfield Union (Springfield, Massachusetts), 15 June 1954, page 16, Geneologybank

"The pledge of allegiance seems to me to omit this theological implication that is fundamental to the American way of life. It should be "One nation, indivisible, under God." Once "under God," then we can define what we mean by "liberty and justice for all." To omit the

words "under God" in the pledge of allegiance is to omit the

character of the American way of life. From Reverend George M. Docherty's sermon "UNDER GOD"

Under God

President Eisenhower has signed a bill to revise the Pledge of Allegiance so it now will read "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

We like the comment of the woman who said: "I'm glad it's done. I've been saying the pledge that way, mentally, for years."

one of those features.

If, as some historians say, the United

States of America really began when John

Hancock as president of the Continental

Congress affixed his signature to the

Declaration of Independence July 4, 1776,

then the resolution passed by the current

Congress becomes more significant. That

resolution added the words, "under God,"

gress that this nation was to be predicated

on a divine basis. The "unalienable

It was plain in the Continental Con-

rights" are endowed by the Creator. The WHAT IS HAPPENING?

in the name of "Nature's God." Lor ONE of our women lawmakers

Bryce recognized the divinity of our gov troduce legislation to grant to

ernment as one of its distinctive feature: Billy Graham, evangelist, a sub-

Probably there was good cause to sidy to finance the spreading of his particular type of persuasion

separation from England was declare Editor, The Times:

to the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

"I came from Scotland where we said 'God save our gracious queen,' 'Go. save our gracious king

Here was the pledge of

in it at all."

-Docherty

allegiance, and God was

what Congress has just done. Advocate throughout the world. of world government have raised a stori every taxpayer to contribute to of protest in this country from those wh the upkeep of Billy Graham and fear our form of government might los his troupe-will receive unchalits distinctive features, as well as it lenged passage, there is little doubt, considering the speed identity. Belief in a Supreme Being i with which the Senate adopted the resolution to insert the

"This is the issue we face today: A

freedom that respects the rights of

the minorities, but is defined by a

of life that sees man, not as the

concatenation of evolutionary

process, but a sentient being

restless till he rest in God."

George M. Docherty, "UNDER

created by God and seeking to

know His will, and "Whose soul is

NewPledge

Has Debut

At Capital

WASHINGTON (INS)-

the newly revised pledge

cited for the first time Mon-

day in flag-day ceremonies on

the steps of the U.S. capitol

the legislation authorizing in

sertion of the words "under

and Senator Homer Fergu-

son, Republican, Michigan--

lows: "I pledge allegiance to

the flag of the United States

first time 13 minutes later.

recited it officially for the

The new pledge is as fol-

God" and authors of the law

Representative Louis Ra-

Democrat. Michigan.

erica and to the repub-

which it stands; one

under God, indivisible,

berty and justice for

President Eisenhower signed

allegiance to the flag was re-

fundamental belief in God. A way

Itimate outcome of a mysterious

mmunism boasts that it recognize of allegiance, which requires preme authority but the state. The that every man, woman and ry was conceived on a differer viction, shall say the words "under God" when pledging allegiance to our flag and country. What has happened to the constitutional guarantee separating church and state? Were our founding fathers jesting when they stipulated that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion"? Late developments would make it appear that separation of church and state, once a fundamental principle in the American theory of government,

is now a thing of the past.

-J. I. McKAY,

Recent Diplomacy

There have been a number of court cases in recent and not so recent years challenging "under God". Many of these were concerns about it being recited in schools while including these words. Some of them were dealing with the possibility that these words violated the establishment cause, "a wall of separation between church and state"

MICHAEL A. NEWDOW, PETITIONE R v.UNITED STATES CONGRESS, ET AL

"QUESTIONS PRESENTED

"under God" in the Pledge of

2. Whether there is a waiver of

sovereign and Speech or Debate

3. Whether a noncustodial parent has

Article III standing to challenge the

In the Supreme Court of the United

immunities inherent in the

Pledge of Allegiance on

Establishment Clause grounds.

How Thomas Jefferson's "Wall of Separation" Redefined

"When hard questions of

domestic relations are

utcome, the prudent

course is for the federal

court to stay its hand

ather than reach out to

of federal constitutional

law,"-Justice Stevens

esolve a weighty question

sure to affect the

Church-State Law and Policy, 2003, Chronicles

Establishment Clause.

the First Amendment.

1. Whether the inclusion of the phrase

Allegiance to the United States Flag

violates the Establishment Clause of

"No. 03-7 In the Supreme Court of the United States MICHAEL A. NEWDOW,

UNITED STATES CONGRES ON PETITION FOR A WRIT OF CERTIORARI

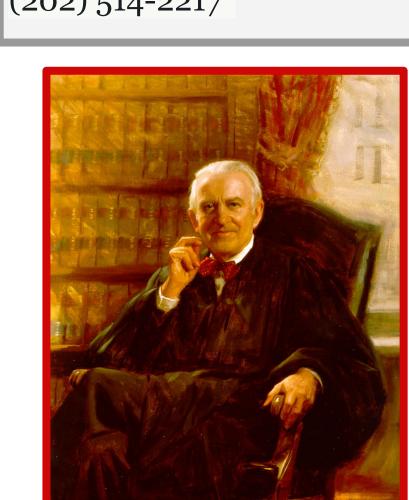
TO THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT BRIEF FOR THE UNITED STATES IN OPPOSITION THEODORE B. OLSON

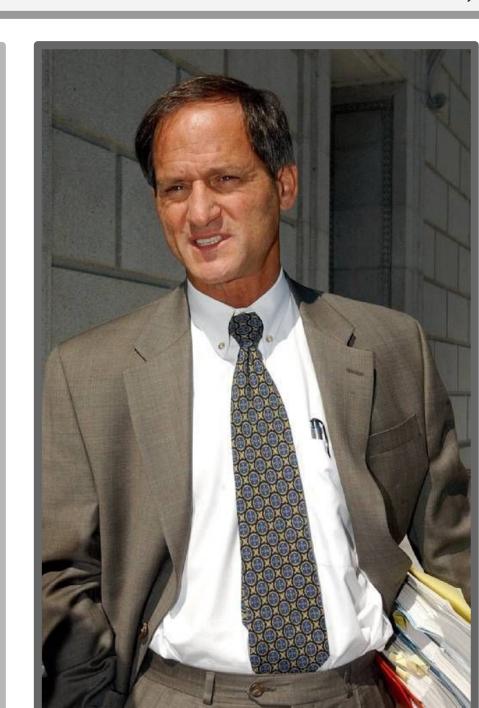
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"Newdow does not allege that his daughter's teacher or school district requires his daughter to participate in reciting the Pledge. 3 Rather, he claims that his daughter is injured when she is compelled to "watch and listen as her stateemployed teacher in her state-run school leads her proclaiming that there is a God, and that our's [sic]

is `one nation under God,' "In March 2000, petitioner filed suit against the United States Congress, the President, the United States of America, the State of California, and two California school districts and their superintendents, seeking a declaration that the 1954 statute adding the words "under God" to the Pledge is "facially unconstitutional" under the

Establishment and Free Exercise Clauses of the

classmates in a ritual

"Thomas Jefferson and our other

Founding Fathers understood tha

our freedom. Our freedom comes

from God, and the government was

God-given freedom. That was their

justification for the American

the government does not give u

established to protect that

Revolution as stated in the

Jefferson wrote:

Declaration of Independence.

"We hold these truths to be

self-evident: that all men are

endowed by their Creator with

among these are life, liberty, and

the pursuit of happiness; that to

secure these rights, governmen

their just powers from the consen

of the governed; that whenever a

form of government becomes

right of the people to alter or to

on such principles..." (emph

No king or emperor, no presider

ives us our rights. They come

unalienable. And the Founders

-Eric Buehrer January 31, 2018

built America's 'foundation o

such principles.'"

from God himself and are

overnment laying its foundation

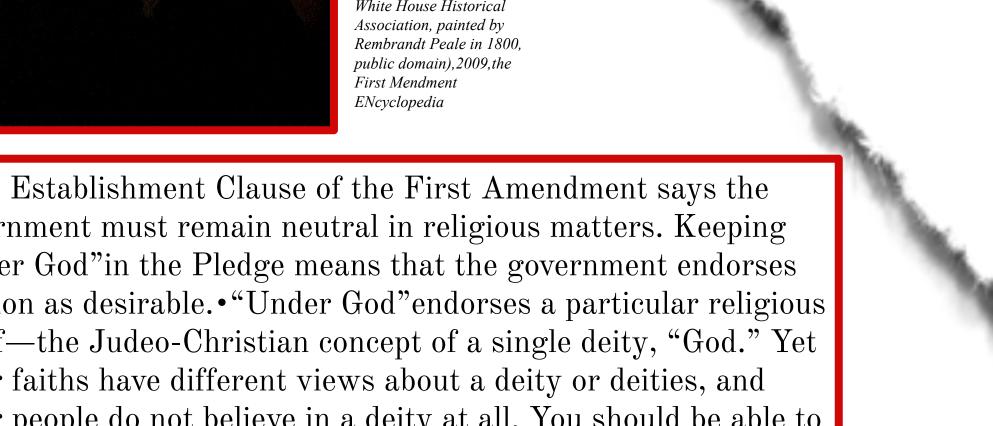


The Debate: Should It Remain?

More fundamentally, the discomfort of some progressives with any hint of religion has often prevented us from effectively addressing issues in moral terms. Some of the problem here is rhetorical – if we scrub language of all religious content, we forfeit the imagery and terminology through which millions of Americans understand both their personal morality and social justice. Imagine Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address without reference to "the judgments of the Lord, or King's I Have a Dream speech without reference to "all of God's children. Their summoning of a higher truth helped inspire what had seemed impossible and move the nation to embrace a common destiny." Barack Obama, Call To Renewal

metaphor "separation of church and state" in a letter where he mentioned a "wall Rembrandt Peale in 1800

"The Establishment Clause of the First Amendment says the government must remain neutral in religious matters. Keeping "under God" in the Pledge means that the government endorses religion as desirable. • "Under God" endorses a particular religious belief—the Judeo-Christian concept of a single deity, "God." Yet other faiths have different views about a deity or deities, and other people do not believe in a deity at all. You should be able to pledge your loyalty to the flag and to the country without having to express a religious belief." -National Constitution Center

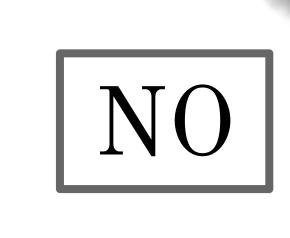


"Separation of Church and State is a phrase that refers



to the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. The phrase dates back to the early days of U.S. history and Thomas Jefferson referred to the First Amendment as creating a "start of Light Yellow comment annotation. wall of separationend of Light Yellow omment annotation." between church and state as the third president of the U.S. The term is also often employed in court cases. For example, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black famously stated in Everson v. Board of Education that "[t]he First Amendment has erected a wall between church and state," and that "[t]hat wall must be kept high and impregnable." -Cornell Law School

ONe Nation Under God 20 by 30 signed and numbered litho print, Mcnaughton fineart company



These words have influenced many debates, and people, Ithrough diplomacy, have reached the conclusion that they help describe an important way of life for the majority of American citizens. This may not stay this way forever, and that's up to us.

"Be the change you wish to see in the

-Mahatma Gandhi